GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:623
ANSWERED ON:26.07.2000
INDO PAK TALKS
RAGHUNANDAN LAL BHATIA

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether U.S. Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs had paid a visit to India in the third week of May, 2000

(b) if so, whether he had held discussions regarding the start of Indo-Pak talks in the light of the release of HurriyatConference leaders; and

(c) if so, the details of the issues discussed and his reaction to India`s stand on the resumption of talks with Pakistan?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE FOR EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

(SHRI AJIT KUMAR PANJA)

[a] Yes, Sir. Mr. Thomas Pickering, the US Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, visited New Delhi on May 24-25, 2000 for Foreign Office Consultations and the Asian Security Dialogue with Foreign Secretary. The two institutional mechanisms are part of the wide ranging Dialogue Architecture agreed upon by Prime Minister and President Clinton during President Clinton`s visit in March 2000.

[b] The two sides discussed a range of bilateral, regional and international issues of mutual concern, including the evolving security situation in Asia. In the context of reducing tensions in South Asia, the US side expressed hope for the resumption of Indo-Pak talks.

[c] The US side reiterated its position, as articulated by President Clinton, namely urging restraint, respect for Line of Control, refraining from violence and renewed lines of communication. The two sides also discussed the persisting problem of cross-border terrorism in India. The US side expressed understanding for India`s position that Pakistan must stop its support for cross-border terrorism and violence in Jammu and Kashmir and create the conditions for the dialogue to take place.